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STATE FOR G/TIP, INL, DRL, AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/09/2016  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [AE](#)  
SUBJECT: RE: TIP/UNITED ARAB EMIRATES ACTION PLAN

REF: A. STATE 87336  
[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 2774

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On June 26, PolOff delivered the trafficking in persons (TIP) action plan (ref A) to the head of the UAE National Anti-Trafficking Committee, Sultan bin Saeed Al-Badi, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Justice. Al-Badi acknowledged UAE trafficking problems but was concerned about the Trafficking Report statistics. He stated that draft legislation for a comprehensive anti-trafficking law was completed and had been sent to the Ministerial Committee for review. He suggested the Embassy pursue the labor component of the action plan directly with the Ministry of Labor. On July 8, the Minister of Labor announced a plan to eliminate exploitive manpower agencies in the construction sector. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Undersecretary Al-Badi, together with MoJ Director of International Cooperation Abdul Rahman Al-Baloushi, acknowledged to PolOff that the UAE continues to have human trafficking problems, but questioned the Trafficking Report's estimate of victims trafficked to the UAE, especially those for sexual exploitation. PolOff explained how the estimates were derived and Al-Badi responded that the official UAE estimates reported to the Committee are far lower, and noted that accurate identification of trafficking victims will have to become a priority for all ministries involved. He mentioned the recent success of the UAEG's efforts to eliminate the trafficking of children as camel jockeys, and said that "our leaders are committed to eliminating all human trafficking."

[1](#)3. (C) Al-Badi stated that MoJ and the Legislative Technical Committee had recently concluded its review of a comprehensive anti-trafficking law that will specifically define trafficking in persons, and impose "strict penalties" for all forms of trafficking. He stated that the draft law would proceed to the Ministerial Committee for Legislation prior to being forwarded to the Supreme Council. (Note: On July 9, MFA Director for International Organizations, Yacoub Al-Hosani, who is also a member of the Anti-Trafficking Committee, told PolChief that the anti-trafficking law was being discussed that morning before the Ministerial Committee, headed by the Minister of Justice. Also on July 9, Arabic daily "Al-Khaleej" reported that the draft law consists of 18 articles that criminalize human trafficking, highlighting trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and codifies the role of the National Anti-Trafficking Committee. End Note.) Al-Badi stated that he would disseminate the action plan to all the ministries involved, but noted that the first two items of the action plan dealt specifically with labor issues, and suggested that Post follow-up on these issues directly with the Ministry of Labor to ensure that MoL fully understands the action plan suggestions.

¶4. (C) On June 28, EconOff met with Mohammed Ahmed Abdulkarim Al-Zaabi, Director of International Relations at the Ministry of Labor, who is the MoL representative on the Anti-Trafficking Committee. EconOff passed the TIP action plan to Al-Zaabi who immediately noted that the first two items were labor issues that his ministry was currently working to address. On July 8, Minister of Labor Dr. Ali bin Abdullah Al-Kaabi told the press that the Ministry of Labor is developing a program to oversee all labor recruitment. Describing labor recruiting agencies as "corrupt and mafia-like organizations," Al-Kaabi stated that plans were underway to shut down the manpower agencies that recruit construction laborers for the UAE. He also announced that he would travel after Ramadan (which ends around October 24) to Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines to pursue labor exchange agreements that would eliminate the middlemen from construction-labor recruitment, thereby eliminating the excessive fees in obtaining work visas.

¶5. (C) Minister Al-Kaabi also announced that MoL was considering regulations to ensure timely payment of salaries. One of the proposed regulations would offer preferential treatment, including the elimination of the requirement for bank guarantees, to companies that deposit employee salaries with Emirates Post, the official postal service of the UAE. Emirates Post, which offers money transfer services via a network of financial agencies throughout South Asia, would then have the salaries ready for payment at the beginning of each month either locally, or through financial agencies in the employee's home country.  
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